

Iowa State University  
MUS 151A – Cantamus  
Spring 2023 Syllabus

Professor: Dr. Jennifer Rodgers, Assistant Director of Choral Activities

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Office Hours: By appointment (online or on campus)

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To form a creative community, dedicated to collective, musical expression.
2. To rehearse and present programs and projects of diverse, high-quality music that advances the genre and practice of treble-voice ensembles.
3. To further each singer's knowledge of and care for their vocal instrument.
4. To reflect credit on the university, the department of music and theatre, and the ensemble itself by demonstration of high standards of preparation, performance, commitment to each other, and pride.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will:

1. Demonstrate the ability to perform a variety of music with attention to musical factors, including style, articulation, dynamics, blend and balance, intonation, rhythm, and phrasing.
2. Acquire knowledge of the repertoire to be performed, including historical and cultural context.
3. Demonstrate the ability to successfully contribute to a cooperative learning environment.

## EXPECTATIONS

- The experience of singing in a choir will be unlike any other class you take at ISU. In each class, you must be fully active and engaged in the process of creating art. This can be a tremendously rewarding endeavor, one that you will remember for the rest of your life, but it takes energy, commitment, and courage.
- There may be occasional assignments that need work outside of class.

- Treat all members of the ensemble with respect and openness, for it is the strength of our community that will create the excellence in our artistic pursuits.
- Distractions: Texting and phone use in class, except when part of the ensemble's process, is not allowed. If you are discovered texting in class, you will lose your attendance credit for that class.

## REHEARSAL TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Cantamus weekly class sessions take place on MWF from 11:00 – 11:50 a.m. Class location will shift between Music Hall 130 and 140 and outdoor spaces according to the work at hand, health advisories, and room availability. Ensemble members must closely monitor the canvas page, email, and/or chat group for updated locations and weekly agendas.

Additional rehearsals will be required close to concert dates, including dress rehearsals and combined ensemble rehearsals. These will be announced far in advance whenever possible and are required for participation. If you are unable to attend in full, please talk with Dr. Rodgers as soon as the conflict is known.

## SPRING PERFORMANCES AND SPECIAL DATES

- Sunday, January 29 – Cantamus Spring Retreat (Music Hall). 12:30-5:30 p.m.
- Monday, March 6 – Moira Smiley Concert (location and exact time TBD). 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. *estimated call time.* 7:00 or 7:30 p.m. *concert.*
- Monday, March 20 – POSSIBLE Monday Monologues Performance (Parks Library Steps). 12:00 p.m. *call time.* 12:25 p.m. *performance time.* Done by 12:45 p.m.
- Sunday, March 26– Cantamus Spring Concert (MET Recital Hall). 3:00 *call time.* 4:30 *concert.*
- Wednesday, March 29 – Recording Session (MET Recital Hall). 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
- Saturday, April 15 – Masterworks Combined Choir Rehearsal (Music Hall). 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 25 – Masterworks Combined Choir Rehearsal (Music Hall). 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
- Saturday, April 29 – Masterworks Combined Choir and Orchestra Rehearsal (Stephens Auditorium) 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Sunday, April 30 – Masterworks Concert (Stephens Auditorium) – *Call Time TBD.* 3:00 *Concert.*
- Saturday, May 6 – Cantamus May Party (Dr. Rodgers' Home) 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Ensemble singing requires full participation. Attendance is mandatory for all rehearsals, retreats, and performances. Arrive on time and ready to participate, whether classes are

online or in-person. Our vocal tech and warm-up time are critical to voice care and the development of our ensemble community.

The most important component of attendance and participation is communication. *If you need to be absent, communicating with the director is what will determine between an excused or unexcused absence. See the grading policy for how reduced participation due to unexcused absences will affect your grade.*

Excused absences should be communicated, in advance whenever possible, by email to [rodgersj@iastate.edu](mailto:rodgersj@iastate.edu). These include illness, emergency in the family, or university related events away from campus. All other conflicts will be considered for approval at Dr. Rodgers' discretion. I may not respond to every individual email, but will have them to refer to when recording your absence. The attendance policy has been designed to ensure fairness, both to the individual and the organization, and with the success of the ensemble in mind.

With the exception of student teachers, each member is expected to participate in the ensemble for the full academic year. Please plan your schedules accordingly. If you cannot participate in both semesters of the year, please discuss your situation with Dr. Rodgers before joining the ensemble.

## **VOCAL HEALTH**

Your vocal health is critical to your health and well-being and to the success of this ensemble. If you are experiencing voice fatigue, chronic stress, or discomfort, please talk with Dr. Rodgers immediately. If you are needing to rest your voice in part or in full, but able to attend rehearsals, please inform Dr. Rodgers at the beginning of class and be prepared to fully participate outside of actually vocalizing.

If you are contagious or suspect you may be contagious with any virus, *do not come to rehearsal* and send an email about your absence.

## **ILLNESS POLICY**

If you are contagious or suspect you may be contagious with any virus, *do not come to rehearsal* and send an email about your absence. It is your responsibility to work with your instructor and section leader to pick up what you missed.

You may choose to wear a face mask and/or receive the COVID-19 vaccine and boosters, as well as other vaccines such as influenza, but those options are not required. We will also follow the singing science recommendations of spacing and air filtration in our rehearsals.

In a choral ensemble, your commitment to contributing to a healthy environment is the most important thing in my opinion. This includes good self-assessment and protocols, communication with colleagues and instructors, and attention to healthy communal settings (respecting the decisions of others, showing caution when appropriate, keeping aware of health trends in the close-knit voice community).

## **SECTION LEADERS AND OFFICERS**

Each section (S1/S2/A1/A2) will have a designated section leader who will, in coordination with the conductor, be responsible for the organization of the section, provide follow up and other communications, and help to prepare and lead sectional rehearsals.

A panel of student leaders was elected in last spring and additional positions may be announced. These elected officers and committee chairs help with the long-range planning, policies, social structures, and general well-being of the group. They meet regularly with the director and are accessible to all ensemble members as representatives of the overall group. Please contact them with ideas for activities, fundraisers and improvements, or feel free to come to any meeting – they are open to all Cantamus members!

## **CONCERT ATTIRE**

Coordinated attire will be determined for use at all concerts and will change to suit the formality and conditions of the concert. In general, singers should plan to professional true- black attire that includes a sleeved top, dress pants or skirt, black dress shoes and tights/hose/socks. A solid-color sleeved top will also be utilized frequently. Minimal jewelry is permitted. *Remember that we aim to present ourselves as a unified, high-level vocal ensemble. I expect your commitment to both looking professional and contributing to the image of the ensemble. Attire that draws attention (in bling, tightness, shortness, or non-conformity) distracts from both of those aims.*

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

Music will be loaned to students by the University and must be returned at the end of semester or academic year, as appropriate. Each singer has a numbered box in Music Hall Rm. 130. Music for massed choir performance may sometimes be purchased by students. See the Fee/Dues section below for details.

Black folders are required for any performances that are not memorized. If binders/folders are not provided by the university, they must be supplied by the student.

Rehearsal recordings will be available for some pieces and will be posted on Canvas. While they may be utilized at any time, there may be specific passages that students will be responsible for securing outside of regular rehearsals.

Pencils are required at every rehearsal. Rehearsal marks are strongly encouraged and all marks made on music must be in pencil. It is courteous and professional practice to erase scores before turning in.

## **FEES/DUES**

The purchase of the score for our Masterworks and Holiday Concerts are usually passed along to ensemble members. If applicable, they will be billed as a class fee ranging from \$15-\$25.

In addition to a regular class, Cantamus is an ISU student club. Officers will collect dues of \$10 per semester to fund the groups social activities and other expenses decided on by the ensemble leadership team.

## MARKETING

As a member of a Department of Music & Theatre musical ensemble, we assume that you waive the right for your image and related audio for use in advertising/marketing for Iowa State University. If this is not acceptable, you must notify your course instructor, and the department chair of Music & Theatre, in writing, by the 10th day of the semester.

## GRADES AND GRADING POLICY

Grades will be based on rehearsal participation, evidence of preparation and readiness, and each member's general conduct, attitude, and contribution to the enrichment of the group effort. A great performing ensemble centers around its desire to work together for a common goal, and so, your contribution to the aesthetic and psychological spirit of the ensemble is required at all times.

Letter grades will be assigned through a point system which is explained below. Should a student be on track for a failing grade at any time during the semester, the student may, at the discretion of the conductor, be dismissed from the choir at that time.

### *Grade Point System*

Each singer will receive a final grade based on the following point system:

- Rehearsal (online or in person) = 5 points per session reflecting timeliness, materials at hand, musical preparation, and level of engagement in rehearsal, including active presence, full-body participation, contributions to the community, and maintaining a positive attitude. *Unexcused absences will not receive the 5 points for the missed class. More than three unexcused absences will likely impact your final grade in this course.*
- Assignments = 15 points each. Graded assignments (if any) will be designated in Canvas and announced in rehearsal sessions.
- Performance/Recording Session (including virtual choir submissions, outside recording segments, and final digital submissions) = 25 points per event reflecting timeliness, all materials, appropriate attire, and performance to the maximum of personal ability, including displaying good poise and behavior, and maintaining a positive attitude. *Unexcused absences will not receive the 25 points for the missed event. In addition, excused absences that could have been communicated at least 3 weeks in advance of missing the event, will be penalized.*

All three areas are averaged for the final grade.

An unexcused absence from a performance, failure to submit a digital recording, or certain behaviors determined to be detrimental to the choral program may result, at the discretion of the conductor, in a failing grade.

## **INCLUSION AND RESPECT**

Our community grows richer by welcoming each and all of our differences and creating a space where every person can share their identities and be assured of respect, safety, and the invitation to be vulnerable and open with each other. Courtesy and mutual respect are expected at all times, and it is my very great hope that each of you will go well beyond that minimum and seek to understand and accept each other's stories and experiences.

I am committed to fostering this inclusive space and addressing all barriers that would prevent students from fully investing in our work together. My door (virtual or physical) is open to all students should difficulty or discomfort arise. Among my commitments to you are those in regard to:

*Gender Identity/Expression:* Please know that class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me accordingly early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

### *Free Expression*

Iowa State University supports and upholds the First Amendment protection of freedom of speech and the principle of academic freedom in order to foster a learning environment where open inquiry and the vigorous debate of a diversity of ideas are encouraged. Students will not be penalized for the content or viewpoints of their speech as long as student expression in a class context is germane to the subject matter of the class and conveyed in an appropriate manner.

*Disability and Accessibility:* In addition to the ISU policies for accommodations and intolerance of discrimination and harassment based on disability status (below and found at [www.sas.dso.iastate.edu](http://www.sas.dso.iastate.edu)), I wish to ensure that our performance and rehearsal spaces and structures are accessible and comfortable for all who wish to sing.

Iowa State University is committed to assuring that all educational activities are free from discrimination and harassment based on disability status. Students requesting accommodations for a documented disability are required to work directly with staff in Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to establish eligibility and learn about related processes before accommodations will be identified. After eligibility is established, SAS staff will create and issue a Notification Letter for each course listing approved reasonable accommodations. This document will be made available to the student and instructor either electronically or in hard-copy every semester. Students and instructors are encouraged to review contents of the Notification Letters as early in the semester as possible to identify a specific, timely plan to deliver/receive the indicated accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are not retroactive in nature and are not

intended to be an unfair advantage. Additional information or assistance is available online at [www.sas.dso.iastate.edu](http://www.sas.dso.iastate.edu), by contacting SAS staff by email at [accessibility@iastate.edu](mailto:accessibility@iastate.edu), or by calling 515-294-7220. Student Accessibility Services is a unit in the Dean of Students Office located at 1076 Student Services Building.

*Religious and Cultural Practice:* Iowa State University welcomes diversity of religious beliefs and practices, recognizing the contributions differing experiences and viewpoints can bring to the community. There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, students may request the reasonable accommodation for religious practices. In all cases, you must put your request in writing. The instructor will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable accommodation when possible to do so without fundamentally altering a course. For students, you should first discuss the conflict and your requested accommodation with your professor at the earliest possible time. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the Dean of Students Office at 515-294-1020 or the Office of Equal Opportunity at 515-294-7612.

#### *Contact Information for Academic Issues*

If you are experiencing, or have experienced, a problem with any of the above issues, email [academicissues@iastate.edu](mailto:academicissues@iastate.edu).